

EXCELSIOR CLASSICS

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STORIES FROM LINCOLN'S LIFE

HIS MOTHER

THE mother of Abraham Lincoln loved her children as only a mother can. In Abraham especially she discerned what the father had overlooked, "a nature rich and rare: kindness of heart, sympathy with suffering, regard for what was right, impatience with wrong." How much of these traits were due to the mother's teachings no one will ever know, but from the last words of advice she gave her son we may conclude that her work was well done.

As the boy stood by her bedside, saddened by her approaching death, she took his hand in hers and with feeble words addressed him: "I am going away from you, Abraham, and shall not return. I know that you will be a good boy, that you will be kind to Sarah and to your father. I want you to live as I have taught you, and to love your Heavenly Father."

Through life, it is said, he heard those words ever ringing in his ears. Well might he exclaim in the

strength of his manhood, "All that I am, all that I hope to be, I owe to my angel mother."

When death came to the relief of the mother, the bereaved husband made the rude coffin, and without even the reading of scripture or a prayer all that was mortal of Nancy Hanks Lincoln was committed to her last place of rest. But Abraham, the ten-year-old son, was not content with this. He set himself to writing a letter to the nearest clergyman — a hundred miles away — to come and preach a funeral sermon. When the letter reached the preacher he recognized it as the work of Nancy Hanks Lincoln's boy. He drove off through the forests to Pigeon Creek, and for miles around the people gathered around the newly-made grave. Here the hymn was sung, the sermon preached and the prayer offered. Thus it was the ten-year-old son honored the memory of the departed mother.

HIS STEPMOTHER

THE death of the mother was a severe blow to the family of Thomas Lincoln. The rude log-house was lonesome, the three children needed a mother's love and helpfulness. The father became anxious and troubled for himself and family. One day without informing the children where he was

going he started off. Down in Kentucky he knew a widow with a family of three children. Her home in Elizabethtown was the place where he had lived. Perhaps she was his first love, for it seems they had been playmates and too late he had sought her hand in earlier life. Fourteen years he had been gone from Elizabethtown. He received a cordial welcome from his old playmate, but when he proposed marriage to her the widow refused to marry any one until her debts were paid. Mr. Lincoln overcame that objection by paying the debts, which amounted to twelve dollars. It was not many days after this when Thomas Lincoln with his new wife and her family set out for Indiana.

A heavy wagon drawn by four horses, loaded with all the earthly possessions of another family, made its appearance at Pigeon Creek not long after. Besides Mr. Lincoln and his bride there were three more children who were to find shelter beneath the same roof with his own children.

Sorrow gave way in the presence of so much of youth, and the mother, interested in the education of her own children, also encouraged the others. She observed that Abraham was fond of books, and through her influence he was able to attend several months of school. When he was able to read, write and cipher, and was ahead of all the boys at Pigeon Creek, his father thought this was all sufficient for

an education. He needed his help, and thus came to an end the school days of Abraham Lincoln — in all they were hardly a twelve-month.

A lasting and helpful intimacy sprang up between Abraham and his stepmother, and in many ways she was a wise counselor, and ever solicitous for his welfare. It should also be said that he was ever ready to help her whenever opportunity might offer.

FLAT-BOAT EXPERIENCE

A FLAT-BOAT was being loaded with corn, pork and other produce and Abraham Lincoln, then nineteen years of age, with the owner's son, was placed in charge. They were to take the rude craft down the river to New Orleans and market the cargo. Abraham was to receive \$8.50 a month for his services.

There was a small cabin on the boat in which the young men slept. They cooked their own food, a section of the boat being covered with several inches of clay, so that a fire could be made for cooking. Borne along by the current there were objects of interest on either shore, and now and then a steamer would pass them going or coming from the city market. There were few settlements and back of these, which were mostly on the high lands, were

the hunting grounds of the Indians. There was a luxuriant growth of shrubs, plants and trees. Below the mouth of the Arkansas River along the banks there were frequently seen the huge bodies of alligators basking in the sunshine.

At Baton Rouge they moored their boat for the night at the landing. They were aroused by a gang of negroes who came on board for plunder. The young men rushed from their rude cabin to protect their cargo. They had no weapons, but Captain Lincoln pitched two of them into the river, a third was knocked down by Gentry, and the others, seeing the fate of their companions, turned heels and fled to the shore.

The people, the language, the houses, manners and customs were new to Lincoln and Gentry. They passed large plantations, where they beheld numerous cabins occupied by the slaves.

At New Orleans were hundreds of flat-boats, moored along the levees; steamboats were going and coming, and ships from all parts of the world were anchored in the river. The cargo was disposed of and the boatmen returned to Indiana. Mr. Gentry was well satisfied with the returns of his venture.

Coffin, in his "Life of Abraham Lincoln," says: "Abraham Lincoln had reached a period in life which many another boy has reached — the period

of restlessness and discontentment. His father wanted him to be a carpenter, but he would like to do something more than push the plane and use a saw all his days. His world is larger than it was before he floated down the great river and saw vessels that had come from all parts of the world. The money which he had earned is not his own, but his father's. It is lonesome at Pigeon Creek. Why stay at home? Why not strike out for himself? But before going he will talk about it with his good friend William Wood at Gentry's Landing.

"'No, Abraham,' said Mr. Wood, 'you must not go: you must stay at home till you are of age and can leave rightfully. It is a duty which you owe to yourself and to your parents.'

"The question is settled — duty! obligation! On Sunday evenings, in the old Kentucky home, when he was a little boy, his mother talked about doing right. He hears once more the words that fell from her lips as he stood by her side for the last time: 'Be kind to your father.' With new strength and resolution he goes back to the Pigeon Creek home as went the child of Nazareth to be obedient to his parents."

VISITS NEW ORLEANS AGAIN

IN 1830, after Abraham had become of age, the family removed to Illinois. He accompanied

them and in every way stood ready to lend a hand whenever his services were needed, and this was frequent, for the journey occurred in the early spring-time, through icy forests, muddy plains and swollen streams. Many times the wheels of the rude wagons sank into the mud and the strong shoulders of the men in the party were needed to extricate them. They came to a river where the turbid water was filled with ice. A little dog that had trotted along beside his master was left on the farther shore as the teams passed over. There was a frightened yelping from the worthless cur, and Abraham Lincoln, barefooted, waded back to the shore and returned with the dog in his arms, remarking as he threw him at his master's feet, "I cannot bear to see even a puppy in distress."

He was now his own man, and many and many a time there came to him this question, what was he going to do? He knew he had strength to cut rails, he knew he could handle a flat boat on the Mississippi and take charge of the cargo, but there was the ambition in his breast to do more than this. As it was he was clothed in buckskin trousers and a 'coon-skin cap. He helped his father build the new log-cabin, and plow fifteen acres of land and split rails enough to fence it. Another settler wanted fifty acres plowed, and he helped out on that. To replenish his scanty wardrobe he made a trade with

Nancy Miller to make him a pair of trousers in exchange for his services splitting rails for her. For each yard of cloth he was to split 400 rails from her woodlot or 1,400 rails in all for a pair of trousers. It is not strange that his political enemies called him a rail splitter.

In 1831 he, with John Hanks and another man, were employed to take a flat boat of products to market. The wages were fifty cents per day and sixty dollars besides. But he found before he could leave it was necessary to make a boat on the Sangamon River. When the boat was ready to launch, the owner invited numerous friends from Springfield to the launching, bringing along a good supply of whiskey. Speeches were made, the whiskey freely drunk. Lincoln was about the only one who refused to take whiskey.

Partially loaded, the boat was floated down the Sangamon to New Salem, where a new obstacle appeared in the shape of a dam across the river, but Abraham was quite equal to the emergency. The barrels were rolled to the stern of the boat in which several holes had been bored so as to let out the water. In the meantime the boat was drawn up on to the dam. Then the holes were plugged up and the barrels were rolled to the bow of the boat, and to the great admiration of the New Salem people the boat slid over the dam. Once below the dam, the seams were calked and made tight with oakum and tar.

At Blue Banks they found a herd of pigs awaiting their arrival. But the pigs had no idea of taking the voyage down the river. They ate the corn fed out to induce them to go on board the boat, but neither coaxing nor driving would avail. Lincoln said, "We might sew up their eyes, and then they would have to go it blind." There was one thing he could do, and that he did: one by one Abraham caught the pigs and carried them on board the boat.

In New Orleans he had the opportunity of looking over the city before his return. He saw gangs of slaves that had come from Kentucky and Tennessee marched out to the plantations. He saw them in the auction-room, where they were sold like a herd of cattle. With quivering lips he turns away from the disagreeable scene, and as he does so declares to John Hanks who was with him, "John, if I ever get a chance to hit that institution, I'll hit it hard, by the Eternal God!"

THE EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION

ON the day Mr. Lincoln called together his Cabinet to present the Emancipation Proclamation, he took up a book from the table and said, "I have a very funny book here, written by Artemus Ward. Let me read you what he says about an outrage at Utica."

“Artemus Ward” was the *nom de plume* of Charles F. Browne, a famous humorist and showman of that time. The title of this particular book was “A. Ward: His Book.” In it the writer claims to give a narrative of his travels through the country as a showman. His spelling was most ludicrously phonetic. He announced that his “show” consisted of “Three moral bares, a kangaroo (a amoozin little raskal), wax figgers of G. Washington, Gen. Taylor, John Bunyan, Capt. Kidd, and Dr. Webster in the act of killing Dr. Parkman, besides several miscellaneous wax statoots of celebrated piruts and murderes, etc., ekalled by few and exceld by none.” One of the figures was that of Judas Iscariot. Everybody who read the book laughed over its contents, and Lincoln’s reading it on this occasion well illustrates his fondness for stories and humor. The outrage at Utica is a jest, that also gives a good idea of the writings of Artemus Ward.

“In the fall of 1856, I showed my show in Utiky, a trooly great sittty in the state of New York. The people gave me a cordial recepshun. The press was loud in her prases.

“1 day as I was givin my discripshun of my Beasts and Snaiks in my usual flowry stile, what was my skorn and disgust to see a big, burly feller walk up to the cage containing my figger of Judas and drag him out on the ground. He then commenced to pound him as hard as he cood.

“ ‘What under the sun are you about?’ cried I.

“ Sez he, ‘What did you bring this pussylanermus cuss here fur?’ and he hit the wax figger another tremenjis blow on the head. Sez I, ‘You egrejus ass, that air’s a wax figger — a representashun of the false ’Postle.’

“ Sez he, ‘That’s all very well for you to say; but I tell you, old man, that Judus Iscariot can’t show himself in Utiky with impunerty.’ With that he kaved in Judasses hed. The young man belonged to 1 of the first families in Utiky. I sood him, and the Joory brawt in a verdick of arson in the 3d degree.”

A good laugh followed in which all joined but Mr. Stanton. He had come to the White House on important business and he could see nothing at which to laugh. He had little appreciation of humor, nor could he comprehend the relief which it had given the President after sleepless nights and anxious days preceding Antietam. The laughter and humor, as nothing else could do, prepared Mr. Lincoln for the consideration of the most momentous questions.

Then addressing the members of the Cabinet, he said, “I have called you together to consult upon an important matter. Gentlemen, I have, as you are aware, thought a great deal about the relation of this war to slavery, and you all remember that several weeks ago, I read you an order I had prepared

on this subject, which, on account of objections made by some of you, was not issued. Ever since then my mind has been much occupied with this subject, and I have thought, all along, that the time for acting on it might probably come. I think the time has come now. I wish it was a better time. I wish that we were in better condition. . . .

“When the Rebel Army was in Frederick, I determined, as soon as it should be driven out of Maryland to issue a proclamation of emancipation, such as I thought most likely to be useful. I said nothing to any one; but I made the promise to myself, and” (hesitating a little) “to my Maker. The Rebel Army is now driven out, and I am going to fulfill that promise. I have got you together to hear what I have written down. I do not wish your advice about the main matter, for that I have determined for myself. . . .

“I have made a vow in a convent — that if God should give us victory in battle I would consider it as an indication of divine will, and that it would be our duty to move forward with emancipation. You may think it strange that I have thus submitted matters when the way was not clear to my mind as to what I ought to do. God has decided this question in favor of the slaves. I am satisfied that I took the right course; it is confirmed by results.”

The proclamation was read and a few verbal

changes were made in it at the suggestions of the Cabinet.

The desirability of issuing such a proclamation had been urged upon Mr. Lincoln, and he thought the time for it had not arrived. A delegation of Chicago clergymen called upon President Lincoln not long before this and urged something of this character. One of these clergymen declared to him, "What you have said compels me to say that it is a message of the divine Master, through me, commanding you, sir, to open the doors and let the oppressed go free!"

"Well, that may be," said the President with twinkling eyes, "but if it is as you say, a message from your divine Master, is it not a little odd that the only channel of communication to me must be by the roundabout way of that awfully wicked city of Chicago?"

The clergymen went their way, and not till some time afterwards did they learn that Lincoln some time before had written the proclamation, and at the time of their call it was laid away in one of his drawers.

LAST WORDS TO HIS CABINET

LINCOLN'S last interview with his Cabinet occurred only a day or two before the dreadful tragedy that ended his earthly career. Mr. Wells,

then a member of the Cabinet, preserved the notes he made at the time, and seven years later wrote them out for publication. They so fully reveal his noble character and kindly feeling towards his enemies that it is always proper to introduce them with anything that is to be said about Lincoln. These last words of counsel should always be associated with the close of his public life.

The war was over and the chief matter under consideration was the reconstruction of the Southern States. In recounting this scene Nicolay and Hay in their history of Abraham Lincoln say:

“The President felt so kindly towards the South, he was so sure of the Cabinet under his guidance, that he was anxious to close the period of strife without overmuch discussion. He was particularly desirous to avoid the shedding of blood, or any vindictiveness of punishment. He gave plain notice that morning that he would have none of that. No one need expect he would take any part in hanging or killing these men, even the worst of them. ‘Frighten out of the country, open the gates, let down the bars, scare them off,’ said he, throwing up his hands as if to scare sheep. ‘Enough lives have been sacrificed; we must extinguish our resentments if we expect harmony and union.’ He deprecated the disposition he had seen in some quarters to hector and dictate to the people of the south, who were trying to right themselves. . . .

He did not wish the autonomy nor the individuality of the states destroyed. He commended the whole subject to the most earnest and careful consideration of the Cabinet; it was, he said, the great question pending, they must now begin to act in the interest of peace.

“ These were the last words that Lincoln spoke to his Cabinet. They dispersed with these words of clemency and good-will in their ears, never again to meet under his wise and benignant chairmanship. He had told them that morning a strange story, which made some demand upon their faith, but the circumstances under which they were next to come together were beyond the scope of the wildest fancy. The day was one of unusual enjoyment to Mr. Lincoln. His son Robert had returned from the field with General Grant, and the President spent an hour with the young soldier in delighted conversation over the campaign. He denied himself generally to the throng of visitors, admitting only a few friends.

“ In the afternoon he went for a long ride with Mrs. Lincoln. His mood, as it had been all day, was singularly happy and tender. He talked much of the past and the future; after four years of trouble and tumult he looked forward to four years of comparative quiet and normal work; after that he expected to go back to Illinois and practice law

again. He was never simpler or gentler than on this day of unprecedented triumph; his heart overflowed with sentiments of gratitude to Heaven, which took the shape usual to generous natures, of love and kindness to all men.

“ From the very beginning of his Presidency, Mr. Lincoln had been constantly subject to the threats of his enemies and the warnings of his friends. The threats came in every form; his mail was infested with brutal and vulgar menace, mostly anonymous, the proper expression of vile and cowardly minds. The warnings were less numerous; the vaporings of village bullies, the extravagances of excited politicians, even the drolling of practical jokers, were faithfully reported to him by zealous or nervous friends. Most of these communications received no notice. Warnings appearing to be most definite, when they came to be examined, proved too vague and confused for further attention. The President was too intelligent not to know that there was some danger. Madmen frequently made their way to the very door of the Executive Offices and sometimes into Mr. Lincoln's presence. He had himself so sane a mind, and a heart so kindly even to his enemies, that it was hard for him to believe in a political hatred so deadly as to lead to murder. He would sometimes laughingly say, ‘ Our friends on the other side would make nothing by changing me

for Mr. Hamlin,' the Vice-President having the reputation of more radical views than his chief.

“Four years of threats and boastings, of alarms that were not founded, and of plots that came to nothing, thus passed away; but precisely at the time when the triumph of the nation over the long insurrection seemed assured, and a feeling of peace and security was diffused over the country, one of the conspiracies, not seemingly more important than the many abortive ones, ripened in the sudden heat of hatred and despair.”

Then the authors, from whom we have quoted, gave the details of the dreadful tragedy that followed in which Mr. Lincoln was shot and stabbed in his private box at the theater. While the members of his family and Cabinet stood over the death-bed on which the worn but peaceful face was at rest, Stanton was the first to break the silence by saying, “Now he belongs to the ages.”

DEFENSE OF TOM GRAYSON

IN “The Graysons,” the author, Edward Eggleston, in his pleasing stories of frontier life, tells the following story of Lincoln’s defense of Tom Grayson, who was charged with the murder of George Lockwood. As a lawyer, Lincoln won more

than local fame, and in this account Mr. Eggleston shows clearly some of his methods and how much he enjoyed pleading for the right.

The prosecuting attorney, with a taste for climaxes, reserved his chief witness to the last. Even now he was not ready to call Sovine. He would add one more stone to the pyramid of presumptive proof before he capped it all with certainty. Markham was therefore put up to identify the old pistol which he had found in Tom's room. Lincoln again waived cross-examination. Blackman felt certain that he himself could have done better. He mentally constructed the questions that should have been put to the deputy sheriff. Was the pistol hot when you found it? Did it smell of powder? Did the family make any objection to your search? Even if the judge ruled out such questions the jury would have heard the questions, and a question often has weight in spite of rulings from the bench. The prosecuting attorney began to feel sure of his own case; he had come to his last witness and his great stroke.

"Call David Sovine," he said, wiping his brow and looking relieved.

"David Sovine! David Sovine! David Sovine!" cried the sheriff in due and ancient form, though David sat almost within whispering distance of him.

The witness stood up.

"Howld up your roight hand," said the clerk.

Then when David's right hand was up Magill rattled off the form of the oath in the most approved and clerkly style, only adding to its effect by the mild brogue of his pronunciation.

"Do sol'm swear 't yull tell th' truth, the' 'ole truth, en nuthin' b' th' truth, s' yilpye God," said the clerk, without once pausing for breath.

Sovine ducked his head and dropped his hand, and the solemnity was over.

"Do you know the prisoner?" asked the prosecutor, with a motion of his head toward the dock.

"Yes, well enough;" but in saying this Dave did not look toward Tom, but out of the window.

"You 've played cards with him, haven't you?"

"Yes."

"Tell his Honor and the jury when and where you played with him."

"We played one night last July, in Wooden & Snyder's store."

"Who proposed to Tom to play with you?"

"George Lockwood. He hollered up the stove-pipe for Tom to come down an' take a game or two with me."

"What did you win that night from Tom?"

"Thirteen dollars, an' his hat an' coat an' boots an' his han'ke'chi'f an' knife."

"Who, if anybody, lent him the money to get back the things which you had won?"

"George Lockwood."

"Tell the jury whether you were at the Timber Creek camp-meeting on the ninth of August."

"Yes; I was."

"What did you see there? Tell about the shooting."

Dave told the story, with little prompting in the way of questions from the lawyer, substantially as he told it at the coroner's inquest.

"How far away from Mason and Lockwood were you when the shooting took place?" asked the prosecutor.

"Twenty foot or more."

"What did Tom shoot with?"

"A pistol."

"What kind of a pistol?"

"One of the ole-fashion' sort — flint-lock, with a ruther long barrel."

The prosecuting lawyer now beckoned to the sheriff, who handed down to him, from off his high desk, Tom's pistol.

"Tell the jury whether this looks like the pistol."

"'Twas just such a one as that. I can't say it was that, but it was hung to the stock like that, an' about as long in the barrel."

"What did Grayson do when he had shot George, and what did you do?"

"Tom run as fast as his feet could carry him,

an' I went up towards George, who 'd fell over. He was dead ag'inst I could get there. Then purty soon the crowd came a-runnin' up to see what the fracas was."

After bringing out some further details, Allen turned to his opponent with an air of confidence and said:

"You can have the witness, Mr. Lincoln."

There was a brief pause, during which the jury-men changed their positions on the hard seats, making a little rustle as they took their right legs from off their left and hung their left legs over their right knees, or vice versa.

Lincoln at length rose slowly from his chair, and stood awhile in silence, regarding Sovine, who seemed excited and nervous, and who visibly paled a little as his eyes sought to escape from the lawyer's gaze.

"You said you were with Lockwood just before the shooting?" the counsel asked.

"Yes." Dave was all alert and answered promptly.

"Were you not pretty close to him when he was shot?"

"No, I wasn't," said Dave, his suspicions excited by this mode of attack. It appeared that the lawyer, for some reason, wanted to make him confess to having been nearer to the scene and perhaps implicated, and he therefore resolved to fight off.

"Are you sure you were as much as ten feet away?"

"I was more than twenty," said Dave huskily.

"What had you and George Lockwood been doing together?"

"We 'd been — talking." Manifestly Dave took fresh alarm at this line of questioning.

"Oh, you had?"

"Yes."

"In a friendly way?"

"Yes, tubby sure; we never had any fuss."

"You parted from him as a friend?"

"Yes, of course."

"By the time Tom came up you 'd got — how far away? Be careful now."

"I 've told you twiste. More than twenty feet."

"You might have been mistaken about its being Tom then?"

"No, I wasn't."

"Did you know it was Tom before he fired?"

"Tubby shore, I did."

"What time of night was it?"

"Long towards ten, I sh'd think."

"It might have been eleven?"

"No, 't wusn't later 'n about ten." This was said doggedly.

"Nor before nine?"

"No, 't wus nigh onto ten, I said." And the wit-

ness showed some irritation, and spoke louder than before.

"How far away were you from the pulpit and meeting-place?"

"Twixt a half a mile an' a mile."

"Not over a mile?"

"No, skiercely a mile."

"Don't you think it might have been a little less than half a mile?"

"No, it's nigh onto a mile. I didn't measure it, but it's a mighty big three-quarters."

The witness answered combatively, and in this mood he made a better impression than he did on his direct examination. The prosecuting attorney looked relieved. Tom listened with an attention painful to see, his eyes moving anxiously from Lincoln to Dave as he wondered what point in Dave's armor the lawyer could be driving at. He saw plainly that his salvation was staked on some last throw.

"You didn't have any candle in your hand, did you, at any time during the evening?"

"No!" said Dave positively. For some reason this question disconcerted him and awakened his suspicion. "What should we have a candle for?" he added.

"Did either George Lockwood or Tom have a candle?"

"No, of course not! What 'd they have candles for?"

"Where were the lights on the camp-ground?"

"Close to the preachers' tent."

"More than three-quarters of a mile away from the place where the murder took place?"

"Anyway as much as three-quarters," said Dave who began to wish that he could modify his previous statement of the distance.

"How far away were you from Lockwood when the murder took place?"

"Twenty feet."

"You said 'or more' awhile ago."

"Well, 't wusn't no less, p'r'aps," said Dave, showing signs of worry. "You don't think I measured it, do yeh?"

"There were no lights nearer than three-quarters of a mile?"

"No," said the witness, the cold perspiration beading on his face as he saw Lincoln's trap opening to receive him.

"You don't mean to say that the platform torches up by the preachers' tent gave any light three-quarters of a mile away and in the woods?"

"No, of course not."

"How could you see Tom and know that it was he that fired, when the only light was nearly a mile away, and inside a circle of tents?"

"Saw by moonlight," said Sovine, snappishly, disposed to dash at any gap that offered a possible way of escape.

"What sort of trees were there on the ground?"

"Beech."

"Beech-leaves are pretty thick in August?" said Lincoln.

"Ye-es, ruther," gasped the witness, seeing a new pitfall yawning just ahead of him.

"And yet light enough from the moon came through these thick beech-trees to let you know Tom Grayson?"

"Yes."

"And you could see him shoot?"

"Yes."

"And you full twenty feet away?"

"Well, about that; nearly twenty, anyhow." Dave shifted his weight to his right foot.

"And you pretend to say to this court that by the moonlight that you got through the beech-trees in August you could even see that it was a pistol that Tom had?"

"Yes." Dave now stood on his left foot.

"And you could see what kind of a pistol it was?" This was said with a little laugh very exasperating to the witness.

"Yes, I could," answered Dave, with dogged resolution not to be faced down.

"And just how the barrel was hung to the stock?" There was a positive sneer in Lincoln's voice now.

"Yes." This was spoken feebly.

"And you twenty feet or more away?"

"I've got awful good eyes, an' I know what I see," whined the witness apologetically.

Here Lincoln paused and looked at Sovine, whose extreme distress was only made the more apparent by his feeble endeavor to conceal his agitation. The counsel, after regarding his uneasy victim for a quarter of a minute, thrust his hand into the tail-pocket of his blue coat, and after a little needless fumbling drew forth a small pamphlet in green covers. He turned the leaves of this with extreme deliberation, while the court-room was utterly silent.

Lincoln appeared to be the only perfectly deliberate person in the room. He seemed disposed to protract the situation as long as possible. He held his victim on the rack and let him suffer. He would turn a leaf or two in his pamphlet and then look up at the demoralized witness, as though to fathom the depth of his torture and to measure the result. At last he fixed his thumb firmly at a certain place on a page and turned his eyes to the judge.

"Now, your Honor," he said to the court, "this witness," with a half-contemptuous gesture of his

awkward left hand toward Sovine, "has sworn over and over that he recognized the accused as the person who shot George Lockwood, near the Union camp-meeting on the night of the ninth of last August, and that he, the witness, was standing at the time twenty feet or more away, while the scene of the shooting was nearly a mile distant from the torches inside the circle of tents. So remarkably sharp are this witness's eyes that he even saw what kind of a pistol the prisoner held in his hands, and how the barrel was hung to the stock, and he is able to identify this pistol of Grayson's as precisely like and probably the identical weapon."

Here Lincoln paused and scrutinized Sovine.

"All these details he saw and observed in the brief space of time preceding the fatal shot — saw and observed them at ten o'clock at night, by means of moonlight shining through the trees — beech-trees in full leaf. That is a pretty hard story. How much light does even a full moon shed in a beech woods like that on the Union camp-ground? Not enough to see your way by, as everybody knows who has had to stumble through such woods."

Lincoln paused here, that the words he had spoken might have time to produce their due effect on the judge, and especially on the slower wits of some of the jury. Meanwhile he turned the leaves of his pamphlet. Then he began once more: "But,

may it please the court, before proceeding with the witness I would like to have the jury look at the almanac which I hold in my hand. They will here see that on the night of the ninth of last August, when this extraordinary witness " — with a sneer at Dave, who had sunk down on a chair in exhaustion — " saw the shape of a pistol at twenty feet away, at ten o'clock, by moonlight, the moon did not rise until half-past one in the morning."

Sovine had been gasping like a fish newly taken from the water while Lincoln uttered these words, and he now began to mutter something.

" You may have a chance to explain when the jury get done looking at the almanac," said the lawyer to him. " For the present you 'd better keep silence."

There was a rustle of excitement in the courtroom, but at a word from the judge the sheriff's gavel fell and all was still. Lincoln walked slowly toward the jury-box and gave the almanac to the foreman, an intelligent farmer. Countrymen in that day were used to consulting almanacs, and one group after another of the jurymen satisfied themselves that on the ninth, that is, on the morning of the tenth, the moon came up at half-past one o'clock. When all had examined the page, the counsel recovered his little book.

" Will you let me look at it? " asked the judge.

“Certainly, your Honor;” and the little witness was handed up to the judge, who, with habitual caution looked it all over, outside and in, even examining the title-page to make sure that the book was genuine and belonged to the current year. Then he took note on a slip of paper of the moon’s rising on the night of August nine and ten, and handed back the almanac to Lincoln, who slowly laid it face downward on the table in front of him, open at the place of its testimony. The audience in the courtroom was utterly silent and expectant.

“Now may it please the court,” Lincoln went on, “I wish at this point to make a motion. I think the court will not regard it as out of order, as the case is very exceptional — a matter of life and death. This witness has solemnly sworn to a story that has manifestly not one word of truth in it. It is one unbroken falsehood. In order to take away the life of an innocent man he has invented this atrocious web of lies to the falsity of which the very heavens above bear witness, as this almanac shows you. Now why does David Sovine go to all this trouble to perjure himself? Why does he wish to swear away the life of that young man who never did him any harm?” Lincoln stood still a moment, and looked at the witness, who had grown ghastly pale about the lips. Then he went on, very slowly. “Because that witness shot and killed George Lockwood himself.

I move, your Honor, that David Sovine be arrested at once for murder.”

The prosecutor got to his feet, probably to suggest that the motion was not in order, since he had yet a right to a redirect examination of Sovine, but as the attorney for the State, his duty was now a divided one as regarded two men charged with the same crime. So he waved his hand irresolutely, stammered inarticulately, and sat down.

“This is at least a case of extraordinary perjury,” said the judge. “Sheriff, arrest David Sovine! This matter will have to be looked into.”

The sheriff came down from his seat, and went up to the now stunned and bewildered Sovine.

“I arrest you,” he said, taking him by the arm.

The day-and-night fear of detection in which Dave had lived for all these weeks had wrecked his self-control at last.

“God!” he muttered, dropping his head with a sort of shudder. “’Tain’t any use keeping it back any longer. I — didn’t mean to shoot him, an’ I wouldn’t ’a’ come here ag’inst Tom if I could ’a’ got away.”

The words appeared to be wrung from him by some internal agony too strong for him to master; they were the involuntary result of the breaking down of his forces under prolonged suffering and terror, culminating in the slow torture inflicted by

his cross-examination. A minute later, when his spasm of irresolution had passed off, he would have retracted his confession if he could. . . .

The whole result of Lincoln's masterful stroke was now for the first time realized, and the excitement bade fair to break over bounds. McCord doubled himself up once or twice in the effort to repress his feelings out of respect for the court, but his emotions were too much for him; his big fist, grasping his ragged hat, appeared above his head.

"Goshamighty! Hooray!" he burst out with a stentorian voice, stamping his foot as he waved his hat.

At this the whole court-roomful of people burst into cheers, laughter, cries, and waving of hats and handkerchiefs, in spite of the sheriff's sharp rapping and shouts of "Order in Court!" And when at length the people were quieted a little, Mrs. Grayson spoke up, with a choking voice:

"Jedge, ain't you a-goin' to let him go now?"

There was a new movement of feeling, and the judge called out: "Sheriff, order in court!" But his voice was husky and tremulous. He took off his spectacles to wipe them, and looked out of the window behind him, and put his handkerchief first to one eye, then to the other, before he put his glasses back.

"May it please the court," said the tall lawyer, who had remained standing, waiting for the tempest

to subside, and who now spoke in a subdued voice, "I move, your Honor, that the jury be instructed to render a verdict of 'Not guilty.'" The judge turned to the prosecuting attorney.

"I don't think, your Honor," stammered Allen, "that I ought to object to the motion of my learned brother, under the peculiar circumstances of this case."

"I don't think you ought," said the judge promptly, and he proceeded to give the jury instructions to render the desired verdict. As soon as the jury, nothing loath, had gone through the formality of a verdict, the sheriff came and opened the door of the box to allow Tom to come out. . . .

[Tom's mother out of gratitude for the service of Mr. Lincoln wanted to deed him her farm. — ED.]

"I'll never take one cent, Aunt Marthy — not a single red cent;" and the lawyer turned away to grasp Tom's hand. But the poor fellow who had so recently felt the halter about his neck could not yet speak his gratitude. "Tom here," said Lincoln, "will be a help in your old days, Aunt Marthy, and then I'll be paid a hundred times. You see it'll tickle me to think that when you talk about this you'll say: 'That's the same Abe Lincoln that I used to knit stockings for when he was a poor, little fellow, with his bare toes sticking out of ragged shoes in the snow.'"

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